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ABSTRACT

This manual is designed to provide creative drama ideas and strategies to teachers of elementary school children with deafness. The purpose of creative drama is to provide opportunities for students to create, share, and explore their ideas. Students also learn to work together, in small and large groups, to portray scenes or stories. The manual begins by listing the benefits of creative drama and guidelines for the classroom teacher. Next, the emotional and physical environment needed to promote creative drama is addressed. Ideas for props, for engaging interest and curiosity, and for calming activities are provided. A section on pantomime explains the art form and includes pantomime activities. The next section focuses on improvisation. Activities for improvising settings and situations, expanding the use of improvisation, and improvising fables are provided. Each activity includes an objective, a list of the materials needed, and a description of the procedure. Recommendations on measuring students' progress are also provided. A list of publishing companies for ordering stories in sign, a list of recommended stories and books for creative drama, and addresses and/or websites for organizations or theater arts programs are included. (Contains 13 references.) (CR)

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ED 418 537

Building Bridges of Understanding

With Creative Drama Strategies

An Introductory Manual for Teachers of Deaf Elementary School Students

by Sharon Jahanian

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Introduction

It is hoped that teachers of deaf elementary school students will find the creative drama (educational drama) ideas and strategies in this manual useful and helpful for their programs. Creative drama is process-oriented and informal, rather than product-oriented and formal. It is generally spontaneous and exploratory. The non-graded, risk free creative drama activities provide opportunities for students to create, share, and explore their ideas. Students also learn to work together, in small and large groups, to portray scenes or stories. These opportunities enable a sense of camaraderie and support to develop within the class.

Playing out words, phrases, and stories in creative drama is also fun for students. Students actively participate. They learn by doing. Theories of whole language and "Multiple Intelligences" (Gardner, 1983) support use of drama in education because linguistic concepts are taught in "whole" contexts and students use visual-spatial and body-kinesthetic intelligences. In addition, the individual reflection, personal expression, and group collaboration of creative drama include use of intra-and interpersonal intelligences.

Studies with hearing students have indicated that creative drama improves reading comprehension (e.g., Burns, Roe & Ross, 1988; Dupont,

1992; Gray, 1987; McCaslin, 1990). Also, vocabulary and thinking strategies (e.g., Cox, 1989) have improved by using creative drama.

Although few studies have been made regarding creative drama's use with deaf children for educational instruction, it appears that the Deaf culture supports use of drama and drama has been used as a technique in educational settings. ASL storytelling and other theatre arts performances have been a rich part of the deaf cultural heritage. By developing creative drama skills, students could become interested in further participation in theatre arts. In addition, the non-verbal expressive language skills of drama tie into ASL features and could enable students to sign in ASL and manually coded English systems with greater clarity.

In creative drama, language is used in context and is multi-dimensional. Students explore the wonder of what ASL and English (signed or written) words can do. They are not bound by scripts and memorized dialogue, but are allowed to express individual interpretations. A sense of delight rather than drudgery may accompany English language acquisition when creative drama activities are included. This is due to students' anticipation of enjoyable enactments.

Since there are no "star performers" the students do not need to compete with one another. Students "own" their work, interpretations,

and angles of vision. The teacher facilitates and encourages; observing and stimulating the unfolding of the students' creativity and imagination.

The teacher provides a variety of high-interest genre selections to enact, making styles of writing, which are unfamiliar, become non-threatening challenges. The attitude of the teacher affirms the students' ability not only to conquer, but to enjoy new material. Validation of students' interpretive attempts demonstrates trust in their decision making abilities and encourages increased participation.

The replaying of scenes (with changes in character, plot, time period, etc.) stimulates students' creative thinking and generalization of concepts. Also, the numerous exposures to words and phrases provide multiple memory imprints for increased retention.

As one can see, the informal, exploratory learning that takes place in creative drama has multiple benefits. Therefore, this manual was designed with the intent of expanding creative drama's use in deaf education. Creative drama techniques are combined with targets to improve students': observational skills, expressiveness (facial, body, gestural), communication strategies, and understanding of written English. Drama techniques are introduced such as: movement experiences, pantomime, improvisation, and

story dramatization. Lessons are given as springboards for further exploration and development by the teacher.

Enjoy the journey!

Benefits of Creative Drama

*stimulates imaginative and creative thinking

*provides opportunities for social cooperation

*requires active participation

*helps release emotions appropriately

*improves repertoire of communication strategies

*provides opportunities for positive communication experiences

*provides opportunities for developing understanding of others

*may stimulate an interest in further arts experiences

*is enjoyable and fun

*extends horizons

Guidelines for the Classroom Teacher

Promote a positive atmosphere.

Keep the environment "safe" from ridicule and embarrassment. Provide ground rules.

Do not become upset if the students get "wired" and "hyper" with their new forms of creative expression…just stop the activity and restate ground rules or use a calming strategy.

Be a positive coach, facilitator, and supporter. Step in and out of activities with encouraging comments when needed, empowering students…stirring up their ideas and creativity.

Remember that the emphasis is on personal growth, rather than on acting ability or natural talent.

Parts should constantly change so students can play many roles…no star performers.

If students portray a story for a group, it must be informal.

Give clear explanations and demonstrations.

Demonstrate confidence in your students' abilities.

Express your own enjoyment and enthusiasm of activities. Enthusiasm can be contagious.

Add humor, when appropriate, and have fun.

Be a "ham"! Let your own imagination and creativity be expressed.

Occasionally, participate as one of the characters in a scene. For example, hop on Aladdin's magic carpet, point out the clouds...birds and breathtaking views below you... Join the fun!

Space and the Physical Environment

The classroom may be adapted for creative drama activities. The students need to have room to move around and this can be accomplished by moving chairs, tables, and desks. Props and clothing items may be stored in boxes or other containers and brought out as needed. If needed, the students could participate in an outdoor area and drama supplies could be taken out on a cart. This may be an alternative to use when classrooms are designed as pods and the activities might distract other classes…or to use when the weather is beautiful!

A corner of the classroom may also be set up, especially for the younger grades, as a "pretend play" area. The "pretend play" area could relate to a theme such as "Community Helpers" and have hats of different occupations and other items related to particular jobs. Themes could be changed on a monthly basis. The clothing and other props would be available for the students' "free play" time.

Ideas for Props

(Remember to **keep props simple**, as creative drama is **process-oriented** rather than performance-oriented. **Imagination is the key**!)

hats (related to occupations and sports)

clothing (shirts, pants, overalls, coats, shawls, etc.)

old costumes (do not use complete costumes)

glasses

cotton beards, mustaches

wigs (colorful clown wig, yarn wigs, etc.)

canes

plastic or rubber swords

capes

plastic noses of different animals

paper headbands with paper ears of animals

crowns

wands

scarves

Ideas for Props (continued)

household objects (e.g., broom)

school objects (e.g., pencil)

different kinds of work items or tools (e.g., stethoscope)

objects related to a story (e.g., a bow "Robin Hood")

various sizes of fabric (handkerchief-sized to tent-sized)

different kinds of fabric (chiffon, velvet, cotton, etc.)

*Note: As deaf children need to use and read facial expressiveness, masks should not be used. Instead, occasionally use face paint or make-up.

Ideas to Engage Interest and Curiosity

Have students pick out words or props from interesting containers such as a treasure chest, old suitcase, decorated jar, velvet drawstring bag, toolbox, etc. If possible, have the container relate to the story or activity.

Have students choose words or ideas written on the chalkboard by circling the words with colored chalk and writing their initials.

Have students underline words (from magazines, newspaper articles, reproducible stories), with colorful markers, which they want to act out.

Calming Activities

These ideas may be used to calm and settle students after an exciting drama activity:

Have the students pretend to be autumn leaves, falling gently into their chairs or onto the floor.

Have the students pretend to be snow melting in the sunshine.

Have the students pretend to put pillows under their heads and rest.

Have the students take deep, relaxing breaths and walk slowly to their seats.

Have the students imagine they are in a beautiful place, such as in a meadow or by the sea. Explain that the place they picture in their minds can be their special, imaginary place to relax.

Have the students slowly tense and relax their face, neck, shoulder, arms, tummy, and leg muscles until they are totally relaxed.

An Introduction to Pantomime

Pantomime is the art of conveying ideas without speaking or signing words. With deaf students, pantomiming may include facial expressions, body language, natural gestures, and certain ASL classifiers. To acquire skills in pantomime, students progress from pantomiming familiar activities, to moods and feelings, to characterizations. Pantomime may be done individually or in groups. Some activities may have all the students pantomiming the same action, whereas others may have each student pantomiming a different character's actions.

Close observation is a means of developing good pantomiming skills. Observations need to encompass: the environment (e.g., trees swaying in the breeze), machines (e.g., the swirling motion of a fan), animals (e.g., a horse galloping), and people (e.g., an old man taking a walk). Movements vary in type, speed of execution, and intensity. For example, a sleepy child awaking from a nap, rubbing his eyes, and stretching his arms moves differently than a child opening a present at his birthday party. The postures of people and animals, their bearing, also need to be observed. Attention should be developed regarding observing the common gestures characteristic of life roles, genders, ages, and cultures. In addition, it is important to realize that

each person has his or her own characteristics, which, when imitated, are recognizable as belonging to that person.

Getting "into character" requires concentrating on an individual, recalling their behavior. In addition, to express the feelings of a particular individual, it is necessary to imagine and "feel" that person's feelings, by "stepping into their shoes." It is often helpful to recall one's own feelings in related situations.

Pantomiming Common Actions: Walking

Objectives: students will pantomime feelings with their actions

students will demonstrate understanding of adverbs and metaphors through pantomime

Materials: none

Procedure: Have the students take turns pantomiming these situations as written on the board: (possible prompts are given in parenthesis)

Walking

Walk *proudly* because you have just received an award. (straight, shoulders back, looking ahead, confident face)

Walk *angrily* because your mom forgot to take you to a party. (stomping or quick tight movements, agitated look on face)

Walk *nervously* because you saw a scary movie. (hunched shoulders, quickly looking side-to-side)

Walk *sadly* because you miss your friend. (slow movements, drooping shoulders, sad face)

Walking like different people

Walk like a king/queen. *"as proud as a peacock"* (a proud, confident stride)

Walk like a toddler. *"as cute as a button"* (awkward, side-to-side movements, arms outstretched)

Walk like an old man/woman. *"as wise as an owl"*
(hunched shoulders, stiff slow movements, understanding look in eyes)

Walk like a bride. *"as pretty as a picture"*
(gracefully)

Review: As a class, discuss what was learned. Clarify and give further examples as needed.

Extensions: Brainstorm different words related to walking and write them on the board (e.g., amble, march, stomp). Have the students imitate your demonstrations of the words.

Pantomiming Common Actions: Cooking

Objectives: students will demonstrate understanding of action verbs in sequential order

students will demonstrate humorous elements in pantomime

Materials: cookbooks and recipe cards

Procedure: Show the students a picture of a stew consisting of vegetables and meat. Write the recipe on the board underlining action verbs. Pantomime following each direction. Use ASL classifiers along with the actions.

Afterwards, have a discussion to clarify meanings of words.

Let the students look through cookbooks and choose recipes to pantomime in pairs. One student will sign the steps to follow and the other student will do the "cooking."

Have the pairs work independently in different areas of the room. Circulate to see if they are on track or need any explanations or suggestions. Have the pairs switch roles, one giving the directions and one pantomiming the cooking.

Afterwards, regroup the class for a discussion of vocabulary. Have the students refer to the cookbooks and list all the cooking actions on the board (such as: peel, slice, crack, stir, mince, add, fry, bake). Also, list all the cooking utensils and appliances that were pantomimed.

Then discuss what would happen if directions were not followed correctly. This will add the element of humor. Examples: salt used instead of sugar, cake stayed in oven too long, etc. List accidents and mistakes that could happen. Have the students get into groups of four to pantomime making cooking mistakes and serving their

food to guests. If they wish, they can present their pantomimes to other groups.

Review: As a class, discuss what was learned about cooking, following directions, and acting out sequences of actions with and without humor.

Extensions: Have the students bring back recipes from home to pantomime on another day.

Have the students underline the cooking directions of recipes in newspapers with bright felt pens.

Have the students look up recipes on the Internet.

Pantomiming Common Actions: Eating and Drinking

Objectives: students will demonstrate use of characterization in pantomime

students will demonstrate understanding of action verbs

Materials: none

Procedure: Explain to the students that they will be pretending to be different animals or people eating or drinking. Use a variety of words to describe eating and drinking in interesting situations such as:

You are a _____.

tyrannosaurus *devouring* a large chunk of meat

mouse *nibbling* cheese

cowboy *chewing* a chicken drumstick

fancy lady *sipping* tea

chicken *pecking* at grain

cow *grazing* on grass

kid *munching* on an apple

horse *gulping* water from a trough

chef *tasting* soup

Have the students practice these actions as a whole class. Then have the students come up with their own ideas for pantomiming the same actions with different characters.

Review:	As a class, discuss what was learned about ways people and animals eat and drink. Discuss how certain characterizations were especially clear.
Extensions:	Have the students find pictures from magazines of animals or people eating. Make sentences together describing their actions.

Pantomiming Common Actions: Playing and Having Fun

Objectives: students will demonstrate understanding of different action verbs through pantomiming

Materials: none

Procedure: Demonstrate some of the activities your family likes to do for fun. Have the students guess what activities you are pantomiming.

Brainstorm other recreational ideas with the class and write the ideas on the board (i.e., playing basketball, sewing, painting, bowling). After the list is completed, pantomime the different activities as a group.

Then have students divide into groups and select an activity to enact in a group pantomime.

Review: As a class, discuss what was learned and review the particular pantomiming techniques that made the enactments clear.

Extensions: Have the students write all action words (in phrases) that they can think of related to a favorite activity. For example:

PLAYING BASKETBALL

dribbling the ball
shooting baskets
passing the ball
scoring points
running on the court
leaping in the air

Pantomiming Common Actions: Doing Chores

Objectives: students will demonstrate understanding of different action verbs through pantomiming

Materials: a box of props representing different chores (a sponge, an old rag, an empty tool box, gardening gloves, a feather duster, etc.)

Procedure: Explain that you have a box of props that represent different kinds of chores people do. Pull out one item, such as a sponge, and sign that you will be scrubbing a kitchen counter. Pantomime an imaginary counter and scrub away.

Give each student a chance to pick an item to use in a spontaneous pantomime. Have them switch items with each other and try other ways of using the props. Identify actions and write the action verbs on note cards. Give the cards to the students to hold for the next activity.

After everyone has had a chance to do brief pantomimes with all of the props, have the students gather together. Collect all of the cards and mix them up. Then have the students stand in a circle and demonstrate the meanings of the written cards by pantomiming the actions (without props) as a group. This way they can watch each other. Clarify meanings when necessary. Try to cover as many words as possible. Some examples could be:

dig	wash	carry
plant	sort	fix
water	mend	hammer
mow	hang	clean
feed	iron	wipe
sweep	straighten	vacuum
scrub	mop	dust

Review: As a class, discuss what was learned and review pantomiming techniques.

Extensions: Have the students and their families compile and write a list of family chores to share in class.

Sort written chores into those done inside a house or apartment, and those done outdoors. Then sort the chores into specific categories such as: kitchen chores, gardening chores, and clothing chores. Pictures, such as of different rooms, might be helpful for use in categorization.

Have the students list their own chores from easiest to most difficult Have them imagine what would happen if no one in their family did any chores. The students could then do impromptu scenes related to the phrase, "What a mess!"

Discuss views of sharing family responsibilities.

Pantomiming: Comparatives

Objectives:	students will demonstrate understanding of comparatives through the use of pantomime
Materials:	none
Procedure:	Tell the whole class to line up in three different lines; making a *long* line, a *longer* line, and one that will be the *longest*. Then have groups of three students demonstrate other comparatives through pantomiming. Some examples: *small, smaller, smallest* (by scrunching smaller and smaller into a ball shape) *tall*, *taller*, *tallest* (by acting out trees) *quick*, *quicker*, *quickest* (by acting out rabbits hopping at different rates) *cold*, *colder*, *coldest* (by increasing amounts of shivering and rubbing hands and crossed arms to get warm) *near*, *nearer*, *nearest* (by standing closer and closer to something in the room) *big*, *bigger*, *biggest* (by expanding arms and face, as if a balloon is getting bigger and bigger)
Review:	As a class, discuss what was learned about pantomiming and English.
Extension:	Look for comparatives in stories.

Pantomiming and Sentence Expansion

Objectives: students will demonstrate understanding of details given in written sentences by pantomiming

Materials: none

Procedure: Have the class sit in a semi-circle so they can easily see the chalkboard. Explain that longer sentences often have more information in them than shorter sentences. Write a basic sentence on the board such as, " He is opening the door." Then write an expansion such as, "He is slowly opening the heavy castle door with an old key because he wants to find the treasure." State that the first sentence is boring. Ask the students why. Assist by explaining that clear descriptions help our imaginations; we can make pictures or movies in our minds. Ask the students to find the "who, what, when, where, why, how" information from both sentences and explain that some information is missing in both. Circle the words which correspond to the "wh" information.

Explain that in acting we can convey a lot of information given in sentences by our body language, facial expressions, and actions.

Have the students act out short sentences. Then allow the students to expand the original sentences by writing other alternatives (keeping the same character and action, but giving more details). Then divide the class in half and have one group come up with a detailed sentence for the other group to act out. Then switch.

Review: Review that long sentences often add clarity by giving important descriptive information.

Extensions: Have the students look for three long sentences from any of their books, write them down, and act them out.

Pantomiming Animals and Their Movements

Objective: students will pantomime movements of animals with realism

Materials: colorful pictures of animals (from a variety of places and habitats, i.e. zoo, farm, jungle, forest, pond, etc.)

Procedure: Discuss and name the different animals pictured. Ask the students to share about their experiences with animals: having pets, visiting a zoo, exploring a forest, etc.

As a class, have the students imitate your pantomime of following animal actions:

a cat washing its face with its paws (pretend to lick the back of your hand and wipe your face like a cat)

a dog scratching its fleas (cup your hand and scratch behind your ear)

a frog jumping (crouch and leap)

Then have the students choose four animals to pantomime by picking out four pictures from the picture collections. Have the students spread out in the room so they will have room for their enactments. Let them explore different possibilities without prompting.

After the students have pantomimed the animals, collect all the pictures. Then have the students group the pictures together as to which ones would be seen in the same area. Have the students name the groupings, such as "farm animals." Have the students enact the groupings as a class with one flash of the classroom lights signaling a change in setting. Example, "Now, at the count of three...everyone become a farm animal." Flash the lights

once to freeze the action. Then change the scene, "Now, zoo animals!" and so forth.

Review: As a class, discuss what was learned. Review what types of pantomiming were especially clear.

Extensions: Have the students dictate or write a story about being one of the animals they pantomimed.

Pantomiming a Scene: Toys Coming to Life

Objective: students will pantomime a "magical" scene about toys

Materials: colorful pictures of toys, a magic wand (toy wand or a classroom ruler)

Procedure: Discuss toys and toy stores with the students. Explain that they will be pantomiming a scene in which the toys in a store come to life. Have each student choose a picture of a toy which they wish to pantomime. Write the names of the toys (the characters) on the board. Ask for a volunteer to be the "good fairy" who will tap the toys with a magic wand. Explain that they are to: line up as toys on a shelf, become alive and move when tapped (one by one down the line) by the good fairy and then, when the good fairy taps a second time, become very still.

If time permits, allow the students do different replays as different toys. The good fairy role could switch to other students, too.

Review: As a class, discuss what was learned. Review the pantomimed movements and write the actions on the board.

Extension: Do a short writing exercise with the students. Have the students pantomime, sign, or fingerspell the actions they performed as toys. Write the actions in the past tense on the board in list form. For younger students, have them use the following format; copying the sentences and filling in spaces appropriately.

We were toys in a toy shop.
First I was a _____. I _____.
(toy) (action).
Then I was a _____. I _____.
Then I was a _____. I _____.

I liked being a _____ the best!

Have older students create a story about the night the toys came alive. Encourage the use of descriptive words so that someone reading the story could clearly imagine what happened.

Pantomiming Feelings Using Facial Expressiveness

Objective: students will demonstrate facial expressiveness

Materials: photographs from magazines of peoples' faces expressing different feelings

Procedure: Show photographs from magazines illustrate peoples' feelings to the class. Note the facial expressions and body postures. Discuss possible reasons for their feelings. Also, discuss and point out differences in intensity (e.g., cautious to terrified; happy to elated or "flying on air"). Draw lines on the board with similar words written along a continuum from weak to strong. Also, add simple drawings to illustrate the feelings.

Describe how our faces show our feelings. Have the students practice the following movements in imitation:

eye area: look, stare, glare, squint, scan, look in different directions, look rapidly side-to-side

eyebrows: raise and lower

forehead and eyebrows: wrinkle and knit together

mouth: bite lip, gape, purse lips, grin, smile with and without teeth showing

jaw: tighten and relax

Pass out the photos and have the students practice pantomiming the feelings using facial expressions.

Review: As a class, discuss what was learned through practicing facial expressions.

Extensions: Make word webs of related feeling words (e.g., surprised-astonished, shocked, amazed, etc.)

Discuss, write, and pantomime the feelings of metaphoric expressions such as:

"under a cloud" (depressed)

"as high as a kite" (very happy)

"as peaceful as a dove" (very calm)

"as snug as a bug in a rug" (very comfortable and cozy)

An Introduction to Improvisation

Improvisation is portraying people and scenes with dialogue which is spontaneous. In the beginning, students may feel comfortable signing short phrases. Their facial expressions, gestures, and body language will add color and meaning to dialogue rather than vocal intonation changes. Objects, articles of clothing, and costumes may be used to stimulate students' imaginations. Also, simple backdrops can be used, such as a blue sheet to represent the sky or ocean.

With positive experiences and observations of their classmates, students may become more bold and expressive. Generally, enacting simple situations should be attempted before complex endeavors, such as reenacting stories. Some situations may include improvising how one would solve a problem, what a person could say, etc. Students may also enjoy acting out scenes from familiar stories read in class. Story characters, settings, plots, and endings may also be changed to develop divergent thinking skills and a variety of perspectives.

Improvising: Visiting Different Outdoor Settings

Objectives: students will use ASL classifiers to represent shapes, location, orientation, type, and number

students will use signs in descriptive phrases

students will dramatize looking around

students will dramatize feelings

Materials: a variety of large, clear pictures of different outdoor scenes

Procedure: Demonstrate walking through an imaginary forest. Use descriptive signed phrases and ASL classifiers. Describe the gigantic, majestic, redwood trees. Point out the sunlight filtering through the heavy pine branches. Point out the green ferns growing. Explain that the dirt feels soft from a recent rain and that pine needles are on the ground. Look at the squirrels scampering on the trees, a woodpecker pecking, a butterfly fluttering by, and a blue jay flying. Smell the fresh pine air. Comment about the cool breeze and zip up your imaginary jacket.

Have pairs of students pick out an outdoor setting to explore and describe as a team. Give the students time to share their ideas with one another. Have them go to different areas of the classroom to practice and play out their ideas. Give suggestions and prompt with questions as needed. Then have them take turns sharing their imaginary walks by enacting the outdoor scenes and descriptions.

Review: As a class, discuss what made descriptions especially vivid and clear. Ask the students if they can think of any other ways to make their descriptions more clear. If time permits, allow the pairs to choose another outdoor scene to pretend to explore.

Extensions: Brainstorm different outdoor settings as a class and write them on the board. Use phrases such as "in a forest."

Tell the class that every story takes place somewhere. Be researchers and look together through story books to find "where" the stories take place. In some stories, there will be more than one setting. Make a list of story settings, dividing them into two categories, indoor and outdoor. For example:

WHERE

indoor settings	outdoor settings
in an old cottage	by the river
in a castle	under a bridge
in a classroom	at the park

Afterwards, work with the phrases as story starters:

"When walking along the beach, I discovered _____"
"In an old cottage, there lived a _____"

Improvising: Visiting Different Indoor Settings

Objectives:

students will use ASL classifiers to represent shapes, location, orientation, type, and number

students will use signs in descriptive phrases

students will dramatize looking around

students will dramatize feelings

Materials:

a variety of large, clear pictures of different types of buildings and dwellings

Procedure:

Demonstrate walking into an (imaginary) elegant dining room. Describe the table, tablecloth, dishes, chandelier above the table, beautiful paintings on the walls, and polished hardwood floors. Use your facial expressions to express your wonder and enchantment with the room. Describe the items in the room and use ASL classifiers to demonstrate shapes, locations, numbers, and orientations as appropriate. Also, use descriptive phrases such as: "Wow! Look at that brilliant chandelier! It sparkles like a million diamonds!"

Have pairs of students pick out places pictured and/or written on the board to "visit." Write a wide variety of choices such as: a stinky, football locker room, a fragrant florist's shop, a new jewelry store, and an old dusty cabin. Remind them that they will be describing and walking in their imaginary place.

Give the class time to discuss their enactments. Each group will improvise a scene. Give prompting only if necessary.

Review: As a class, discuss what made descriptions especially vivid and clear. Ask the students if they can think of any ways to make their portrayals more clear. If time permits, allow the pairs to choose another place to pretend to visit.

Extensions: Discuss places that evoke different feelings such as:

delight
amazement
reverence
fear
excitement

Have students bring in photos and postcards of different buildings and have them describe what they looked like inside.

Have the students write a description of one of their rooms at home.

Improvising Cause and Effect Scenes

Objectives: students will demonstrate understanding of cause and effect through improvisations

students will use ASL shape classifiers in short signed previews of their scenes

Materials: none

Procedure: Have the students get together in pairs. Explain that things that we do affect others. Draw a box on the chalkboard with a quick sketch of a person with a bouquet of flowers. Draw an arrow from that box to another box. In the next box, draw a picture of a woman smiling. Explain that giving the flowers made the woman smile.

Have one student act out this scene with you. Then tell the class you have some situations written on colorful note cards which they can pick from a hat (or other interesting container) and act out in twos. (Have at least twenty-five situations written out.)

Examples of Situations:

You have a beautiful *box* of candy with a golden ribbon tied around it. You give it to your friend. Your friend thanks you and gives you a hug.

You have been shopping. You have too *many packages* and they are starting to fall. Someone comes by and offers to help you carry them.

You leave your *skateboard* by the front door. Dad comes by and trips on it.

(Remind the students to give the ASL shape classifier for the word(s) in special writing)

Review: Discuss what was learned about situations and their effects on people.

Extensions: Have the students draw "if-then" pictures of situations in boxes on the chalkboard.

Have the students write "why" questions and "because" answers related to the scenes they saw enacted.

Examples:

Why did she smile?
She smiled because she got flowers.

Why did he fall?
He fell because he didn't see the skateboard.

Improvising: Handshape Stories

Objectives: students will demonstrate the handshape story tradition
students will improvise stories in a group

Materials: none

Procedure: Since the students know the manual alphabet, explain that you will be using the handshapes of the letters to tell an ABC story in a fun ASL tradition.

Be sure that you have practiced the story beforehand. After your story, ask if you missed any letters of the alphabet.

Have the students sit with their chairs in a large circle. Give the students a situation or scene so they can make associations. (the example below is using S.E.E. signs conceptually, for creative purposes)

City Traffic

A- Ahead
B- Buses!(duplication feature of ASL)
C- Cars! (duplication feature of ASL)
D- Think
E- End?
F- Free
G- Great!
H- Highway
I- I
J- Joy
K- King (of the Road)
L- Look (out!) (etc.)

Selecting Stories for Improvisations

When choosing stories for improvisations, think about stories that would entertain as well as enlighten students. Review children's literature (new stories and old favorites) for stories that have a worthwhile theme and actions that could clearly be enacted. Try to make selections that would relate to curricular expectations and thematic units. For older students, favorite passages of books could be selected. The following are additional suggestions:

the story should involve a conflict or problem to solve

there should be actions in the plot

the characters should be interesting (for characterizations)

situations should challenge the imagination (for dialogue)

there should be a just ending

Preparing for Story Reenactments

In preparation for playing stories, the students must first become familiar with the story. This may be done in many ways. You can tell the story to your students, read the story to them, have the students read to each other in paired reading, read all together as a class, or have the class take parts of the story and do a "readers' theater." (In readers' theater, the students sign the dialogue with facial and signed expressiveness for each character.) In addition, it is helpful to provide closed captioned or signed versions on videotape. Discuss the story, especially focusing on obtaining "who, what, when, where, why" information. Review the meanings of unfamiliar vocabulary.

If possible, provide variations of the story; variations in illustrations, styles, and perspectives. For example, stories similar to Cinderella exist in many cultures. Also, there have been some humorous retellings of fairy tales about "the Frog Prince" and "The Three Little Pigs" published. The retellings give different endings or are from the view of the previously perceived "bad guy." The varied perspectives help expand students' views of story interpretation. Improvisations should not follow the story "word for word," but be students' interpretations and reflect their fresh perspectives.

Improvising Nursery Rhymes

Objective: students will demonstrate understanding of nursery rhymes through improvisation

Materials: a bag of props related to the nursery rhymes

Examples of props:

a plastic spider "Little Miss Muffet"

a pail and paper crown "Jack and Jill"

a toy horn "Little Boy Blue"

Procedure: Read nursery rhymes to the class from a well-illustrated book. Ask "wh" questions and check for understanding. Sign the rhymes together. Act out the main actions of each nursery rhyme as a class, standing together in a large circle.

After the students are familiar with each nursery rhyme, have each student select a prop from the prop bag. They are to enact the nursery rhyme related to the prop, but the prop does not have to be used. The students can ask other students to help them with their nursery rhyme sketches.

If time permits, allow the students to enact different nursery rhymes.

Review: Have the students gather back and share what was fun about the activity. Review again the new vocabulary.

Extensions: Do an art project related to one of the nursery rhymes. For example, the students could make spiders out of black pipe cleaners.

Creating Story Improvisations

Before a group of students can play out a story, they need to decide who they will be, what they will do, and what problems they have to solve. They may select to enact only certain characters in a story and simplify the plot. Story boarding through drawing sketches of scenes and writing key information related to the scenes may be helpful. Remind the students that there must be a setting, clear characterizations, and a beginning, middle and end to their story. If they do not want to use a given story, the teacher could suggest problems to solve and ask "What if?" types of questions to stimulate their imaginations. Also, the students may be given access to a few props to be used in imaginative ways.

The Tortoise and The Hare

by Aesop (retold by S. Jahanian)

The rabbit was bragging again. It seemed that he was always pointing out something he had or could do that others couldn't. One day it was his ears. "I have great ears, much longer than anyone else's," he said. Today, it was his hind legs. "I have the strongest legs of anyone. I am the fastest animal around!" he boasted. The turtle, was irritated and thought to himself, "Enough is enough!" "Look here, rabbit, I will be happy to challenge you to a race." The rabbit, held his stomach and rolled in the grass, laughing. "You! You think you can beat me? Fine, I'll race you."

The other animals were surprised that the turtle wanted to challenge the rabbit. They talked together among themselves. Many felt that the turtle would end up losing and getting embarrassed so they should prevent the race. The wise owl said, "No, I think we should give him our moral support. I think his idea might be a good one after all."

The turtle suggested making the course a very long one. The animals marked off a course that would take the turtle a full day to complete. The turtle and the rabbit lined up at the starting line. "On your mark. Get set. Go!" the owl called.

The rabbit darted ahead and dashed past the first grove of trees. As he glanced behind himself, he saw the turtle, just a speck in the distance, still near the beginning of the race. "What am I doing? That loser would need at least a day to complete the course. I might as well take a nap." Soon the rabbit was deep asleep.

Slowly, with his eyes looking ahead, the turtle plodded along the course. After a few hours, he quietly passed the sleeping rabbit. He continued and continued, even though his shell felt heavier and heavier. Finally, exhausted, he passed the finish line. The owl hooted in delight. The other animals cheered.

"What's that noise?" wondered the rabbit, awaking from his sleep. He thought, "No, impossible. It couldn't be." He ran speedily across the finish line, but he was too late. The other animals were already congratulating the turtle.

Improvising Fables: "The Tortoise and the Hare"

Objective: students will improvise a fable

Materials: a trophy or ribbon

Procedure: Ask about any experiences the students have had participating in competitions. Discuss sports (e.g., soccer games) as well as informal competitions such as seeing who can jump the highest, win at arm wrestling, etc.

Tell the fable in sign with dramatic storytelling techniques and ASL classifiers illustrating locations (under a tree) and movements (such as dashing). Be sure to use your eyes and face (e.g., squint to indicate the hare seeing the tortoise in the distance as a speck).

Then have the students read the fable in paired reading. Afterwards, ask "wh" questions and questions about the characters, comparing their traits. Review the meanings of words by using them in other signed and written sentences. Use fingerspelling as needed. The vocabulary words could include the following:

nouns	verbs	adjectives	adverbs
challenge	brag	irritated	quietly
support	suggest	embarrassed	speedily
course	complete	exhausted	
grove	dart	delighted	
speck	distance		
hope	dash		
endurance	plod		
	hoot		
	cheer		
	congratulate		

Ask the students to discuss what they think was

the moral of the story and give reasons for their views.

Have the students divide into groups to enact the story. Then let the students come up with new stories using other animals in a different type of competition.

Review: Discuss new skills that were learned.

Extensions: Let the students do collaborative research about hares, rabbits, turtles and tortoises by looking up information in library books or by using the Internet. Give each group index cards to write five new things they learned about each animal. As a class make Venn diagrams on the chalkboard with comparisons of similarities and differences.

The Lion and the Mouse

by Aesop (retold by S. Jahanian)

A huge lion was taking a nap in the cool shade of the jungle trees. A small mouse scampered across the lion's face not realizing that the hill was actually a sleeping animal. The lion snatched the mouse in fury, "You little mouse! How dare you disturb me, the King of the Jungle! You shall be my afternoon snack!" "Please, please don't eat me," cried the mouse. "If you let me go, someday I will repay you." The lion was amused. "How could a little thing like you ever help me?" The mouse said, "I will. Believe me." With a laugh, the lion tossed the mouse away. The mouse ran into the jungle.

Time passed. The lion proudly surveyed his territory. As he was walking, suddenly, he got tangled in a hunter's trap! He roared and roared and ROARED! The mouse ran from across the jungle to his assistance. The lion recognized the mouse and asked, "Why are you here?" The mouse said, "You will see. Be still." The lion stopped thrashing about in the net and rested, entangled, on the ground. The mouse gnawed and gnawed, and gnawed at the ropes. Finally the ropes were broken. The lion shook off the net and was free! He stood with the dignity of a king, but with tenderness in

his eyes. The mouse said, "See, mighty king, even a tiny mouse can sometimes be of help." The lion said, "You are right, my little friend."

Improvising Fables: "The Lion and the Mouse"

Objectives: students will improvise a fable

Materials: a version of "The Lion and the Mouse" fable by Aesop
possible props: plastic or paper mice noses, paper manes, ropes (to represent part of the hunter's net trap)

Procedure: Read the story to the students. Use a lot of expression. Ask "wh" questions. Have them identify the two problems that happened in the story. Also, discuss the feelings of the main characters. Then have the students make a sequential story-board of what happened in the story. Afterwards, divide the students into groups of threes. Tell them that one needs to be the role of the narrator, who gives information about the story and moves the story along, and the other two need to play the parts of the lion and the mouse. Also, explain that each of them will take turns portraying each role. Remind them that they do not have to use the same words in the story, but they need to convey the same ideas. Provide time for them to act out the story in their small groups.

After the students have taken turns enacting the story, gather them together for a discussion. Ask how they felt as lions. Ask how they felt as mice. Discuss the message or moral of the story.

Review: Have a class discussion regarding what they learned about fables from acting out a fable. Then have the class share with each other about the ways in which they expressed the movements and feelings of the characters.

Extension: To further develop English vocabulary and syntax skills, write the following sentences on the board to have the students pantomime:

The *tired* lion <u>is yawning</u>.

The *peaceful* lion is sleeping.

The *hungry* lion is prowling.

The *angry* lion is roaring.

The *strong* lion is stretching.

The *scared* mouse is shaking.

The *smart* mouse is asking.

For older students, include more difficult words and expand sentences. Examples:

The *clever* mouse is pleading for mercy.

The *mighty* lion is hunting for prey.

The *frustrated* lion is tangled in a net.

The *patient* mouse is gnawing the ropes.

Also, review key vocabulary words in the story by having the students write the words in sentences about other animals.

Observations and Evaluations

It is suggested that a student's progress be measured informally and individually; instead of formally and in comparison to classroom peers. Creative drama activities should be ungraded. However, it is valuable to observe and evaluate each student's development of new skills. This may be done easily by occasionally videotaping students as they participate in activities. Also, it is helpful to keep anecdotal records. The following are some questions to keep in mind:

> When the student communicates is she/he more expressive than earlier in the year? If so, in what ways?....facial expressiveness, gestures, use of pantomime?
>
> Has the student's signing improved in clarity and complexity? Is the student adding ASL classifiers or other ASL features to his/her signing?
>
> What skills have transferred to the student's writing? Is the student adding more descriptive words, using a greater variety of vocabulary choices, experimenting with different sentence structures? When creating dictated or written stories, does the student include the following: a setting, descriptive characters, plot development, a problem, and a resolution?
>
> Has the student become more actively engaged in other learning activities?
>
> Does the student appear happier and more confident with the addition of creative drama to the curriculum?

Publishing Companies - for ordering stories in signs

Dawn Sign Press
9080 Activity Rd. A
San Diego, CA 92126

(619) 549-5330 (voice)
(619) 549-5333 (TDD)

Sign Media, Inc.
4020 Blackburn Lane
Burtonsville, MD 20866

(301) 421-0268

Gallaudet University Press
800 Florida Ave., N. E.
Washington, DC 20002-3695

(800) 451-1073

T. J. Publishers, Inc.
817 Silver Spring Ave., Ste. 206
Silver Spring, MD 20910-4617

(301) 585-4440

Harris Communications
6541 City West Pkwy.
Eden Prairie, MN 55344-3248

(800) 825-6758

Modern Signs Press
P. O. Box 1181
Los Alamitos, CA 90720

(310) 596-8548

Recommended Stories and Books for Creative Drama

Many stories may be adapted for use in creative drama activities. The media technician at the school may be a good resource for story favorites. Also, school districts often provide lists of recommended books for students at different grade levels. This is a beginning list of possibilities:

Kindergarten - Second Grade

Asbjornsen, P. & Moe, J. (1957). The Three Billy Goats Gruff. New York: Harcort, Brace and World. (a famous Norwegian folk tale about a troll and three goats)

Bantock, N. (1990). There Was an Old Lady. New York: Viking. (a pop-up book of a famous rhyme about a lady with a strange appetite)

Brett, J. (1989). Goldilocks and the Three Bears. New York: Dodd. (famous fairy tale, charmingly illustrated)

Brett, J. (1989). The Mitten. New York: Putnam. (a retelling of the Ukrainian folktale about forest animals snuggling in a mitten to get warm, until a bear sneezes!)

Eastman, P.D. (1960). Are You My Mother? New York: Random House. (about a baby bird trying to find its mother)

Keats, E. (1962). The Snowy Day. New York: Viking Press. (about a boy playing in the snow)

Lobel, A. (1986). Random House Book of Mother Goose. New York: Random House. (nursery rhymes retold and illustrated)

Mayer, M. (1990). Just a Rainy Day. New York: Western Publishing. (about a girl getting into mischief around the house on a rainy day)

Piper, W. (1976). The Little Engine That Could. New York. Platt & Munk. (about a train, with gifts for children, having difficulty going over a mountain)

Potter, B. (1980). Giant Treasury of Peter Rabbit. New York. Derrydale. (tales of a rabbit and his animal friends)

Recommended Stories and Books for Creative Drama (continued)

Regniers, B. (1972). Red Riding Hood. New York: Athemeum. (a familiar fairy tale told in verse form)

Slobodkina, E. (1947). Caps for Sale. New York: William R. Scott. (a peddler falls asleep and monkeys take his caps)

Zion, G. (1956). Harry the Dirty Dog. New York: Harper & Row. (about a dog not wanting to take a bath)

Third Grade - Fifth Grade

Aesop. The Fables of Aesop, retold by J. Jacobs.(1964). New York: Macmillan. (famous fables with animals as main characters)

Brown, M. (1947). Stone Soup. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. (a retelling of the French folktale about three, clever, hungry soldiers)

Grimm Brothers.(1968). Grimm's Fairy Tales. New York: Grosse & Dunlap. (famous fairy tales)

Lobel, A. (1970). Frog and Toad Are Friends. New York: Harper & Row. (five short stories about friendship)

Marshall, J. (1977). Miss Nelson Is Missing. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. (humorous story about misbehaving students and their scary substitute teacher)

Molleson, D. (1993). (simplified adaptation from screenplay of classic) The Secret Garden. New York: Scholastic Inc. (about friendship and healing)

Perrault, C. Cinderella, retold by A. Ehrlich and illustrated by S. Jeffers. (1985). New York: Dial. (beautifully illustrated fairytale)

White, E. (1952). Charlotte's Web. New York: Harper. (a book about a pig and his dear friend who is a spider)

Williams, M. (1958). The Velveteen Rabbit. New York: Doubleday. (about a stuffed rabbit that becomes real)

Zolotow, C. (1987). Everything Glistens and Everything Sings. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. (short, sensitive, and descriptive poems that capture children's feelings and observations)

Addresses and/or Web Sites for Organizations or Theatre Arts Programs

D.E.A.F. Media, Inc.
2600 Tenth St. (510) 841-0165 TTY
Berkeley, CA 94710 (510) 841-0163 Voice

A non-profit organization which supports and provides theatre arts opportunities for deaf individuals.

The Model Secondary School (MSSD) Deaf Performing Arts Program

http://www.gallaudet.edu/~mssdweb/start.html

A high school program committed to quality arts experiences for deaf children.

National Theater of the Deaf (NTD)
5 W. Main St. P.O. Box 659 (203) 526-4974 TTY
Chester, CT 06412-0659 (203) 526-4971 Voice
(806) 526-9732 FAX

Gives productions and sponsors professional deaf actors.

National Information Center on Deafness
Gallaudet University
800 Florida Ave. NE (202) 651-5585 TTY
Washington, D.C. 20002 (202) 651-5051 Voice

www.gallaudet.edu/~nicd/

National Association of the Deaf (NAD) bookstore:
814 Thayer Avenue (301) 587-6283 TTY
Silver Spring, MD 20910-4500 (301) 587-6282 Voice

www. Nad.org

Council on Education of the Deaf
http://www. Educ.Kent.edu/deafed

Deaf World Web
http://deafworldweb.org./dww
or
http://deafworldweb.org/

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Cox, C. (1989). Teaching language arts. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

DuPont, S. (1992). The effectiveness of creative drama as an instructional strategy to enhance the reading comprehension skills of fifth-grade remedial readers. Reading Research and Instruction, 31 (3), 41-52.

Gardner, H. (1983). Frames of mind: The theory of multiple intelligences. New York: Basic Books.

Gray, M. (1987). A frill that works: Creative dramatics in the basal reading lesson. Reading Horizons, 38, 5-11.

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Lentz, E., Mikos, K, & Smith, C. (1992). Signing naturally. San Diego, CA: Dawn Sign.

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